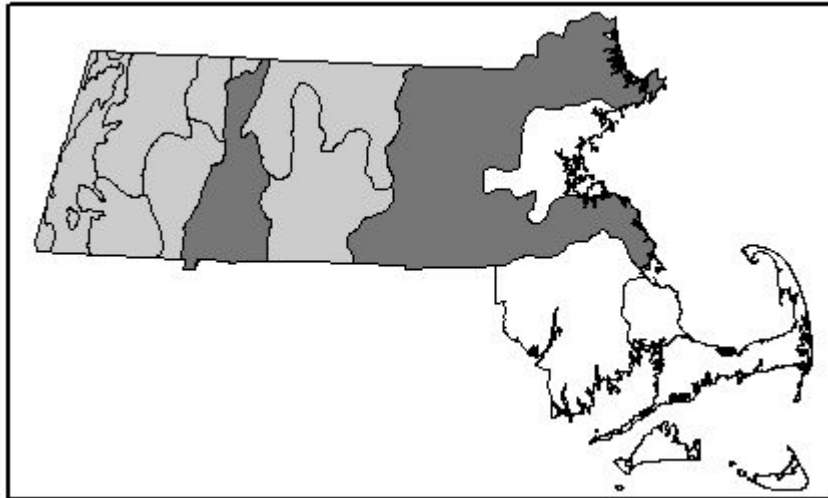


Community Name: DRY RIVERSIDE BLUFF

Community Code: CT2B2B1000

SRANK: S2



Concept: An erosional gravel/sandy cliff face next to rivers or river floodplains supporting species of dry habitats in predominantly open conditions.

Environmental Setting: High, 20-40 feet, bluffs of gravel next to river floodplains. Fire has been important in at least some situations, especially on drier south and southwest facing slopes. In areas of oak - pine forests, bluff tops and surroundings may support black oak savannas or dry to mesic oak - pine forests or woodlands. Wetter areas between slopes support shrub thickets or forests.

Vegetation Description: Scattered individuals or thickets of scrub oak (*Quercus ilicifolia*), American hazelnut (*Corylus americana*), gray birch (*Betula populifolia*), and trembling aspen (*Populus tremuloides*), with little blue stem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), lowbush blueberries (*Vaccinium angustifolium* and *V. pallidum*), sweet fern (*Comptonia peregrina*), goat's rue (*Tephrosia virginiana*), stiff aster (*Ionactis linariifolius*), woodland sunflower (*Helianthus divaricatus*), and lupine (*Lupinus perennis*) between patches. Bare ground maintained by erosion, amount varies with location and recent disturbances. This community - type may be subdivided into Acidic and Calcareous variants with further inventory.

Associations:

Habitat Values for Associated Fauna: Harsh, dry conditions limit the number of species expected of all types. Bank Swallows (*Riparia riparia*) and Belted Kingfisher (*Ceryle alcyon*) nest in sandy banks, especially of large rivers. Less common Northern Rough-winged Swallows (*Stelgidopteryx serripennis*) also use sand and clay banks. Turtles nest in sand that collects at the bottom of such bluffs and tiger beetles breed at the bases and hunt in flatter near by areas.

Associated Rare Plants:

LUPINUS PERENNIS

WILD LUPINE

- WL

Associated Rare Animals:

NONE KNOWN

Examples with Public Access: Clinton River Bluff, Clinton.

Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program, Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife

Threats: Gravel mining removes the community. The substrate is easily disrupted and eroded, but bank stabilization interferes with the natural changes in the community.

Management Needs:

Synonyms

USNVC/TNC: Includes: Pinus strobus -Betula populifolia Woodland Alliance -- Pinus strobus - Betula populifolia / Comptonia peregrina/ Schizachyrium scoparium Woodland [CEGL006004]; Small eroding Cliffs/ banks Sparse Vegetation Alliance -- Eroding Cliffs Sparse Vegetation [CEGL002315].

MA (old name): DRY SANDY RIVERBLUFF OPENING.

ME:

NH: Part of: White pine - gray birch / sweet fern / little bluestem woodland.

VT: Erosional River Bluff Community.

NY:

CT:

RI:

Weatherbee:

Author: P. Swain

Date: 8/5/99